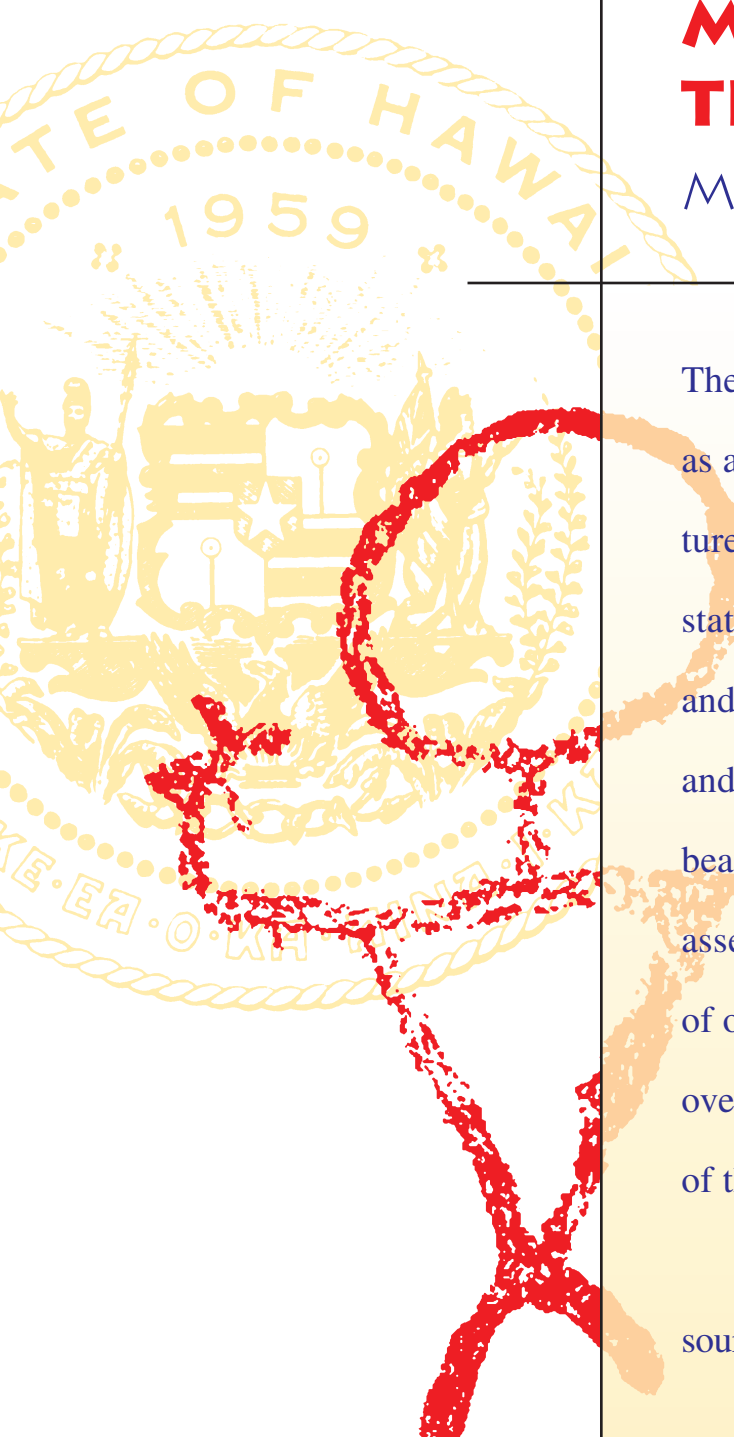


CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"

MICHAEL WILSON



The world has come to recognize Hawai'i as a paradise on Earth. Home to rare creatures and plants found nowhere else, our state is blessed with breathtaking features and vistas which trigger the imagination and inspire us to greatness. But for all the beauty and grandeur, Hawai'i's greatest assets are their own undoing. The bounty of our islands seems unending, inviting overuse and a decline in the overall health of the environment.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources plays a crucial role in the preservation

**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"**

of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources from the mountain tops out to sea. It is our challenge as stewards of Hawai'i's natural heritage to stop the loss of our beaches and shorelines, reverse declining tropical reef fish populations, and control resource degradation from increasing human recreational and shore uses.

This remote land mass is home to spectacular coral reef systems, dramatic mountains and forests as well as a great variety of plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth. In fact, Hawai'i has more endangered species than any other state in the nation.

For that reason, the concept of "Sustainability — managing Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources responsibly today, for the benefit of future generations" is central to our decision-making process and our management ideals. DLNR is engaged in numerous efforts to maintain or improve the health of our resources, while gaining better understanding of their complexity.

As we view the changing face of Hawai'i, and recognize the long-term impacts of increasing pressure on our resources, eco-

nomic growth can no longer be considered without conscious attention to environmental protection. Now, more than ever before, fiscal austerity is requiring DLNR to become more creative about balancing uses and protection. To achieve "Sustainability" we are employing a more comprehensive, community-based approach to management, and maximizing our research opportunities through cooperative projects we share with other agencies, such as the University of Hawai'i.

During fiscal years 1996-97 and 1997-98, our focus was on effective "implementation" of sustainability through building public and private partnerships to protect and replenish our natural resources.

Following are some of the programs and projects we accomplished in the biennium, with the support of Governor Cayetano and the State Legislature:

FY 1996-97:**"OCEAN STATE" INITIATIVE**

The alarming state of Hawai'i's ocean resources, key fisheries on the brink of collapse, galvanized

the Legislature, with strong support from the Governor through his Ocean State Initiative — to approve additional funding in the biennium for the creation of six new aquatic resources staff positions. During its 1997 session, the Legislature boosted the state aquatics budget by approximately \$1.72 million. The Ocean Initiative is being implemented through a "Fish for the Future" campaign that includes projects such as a bottomfish recovery program, increasing the size of existing artificial reef habitats, and expanding the successful mullet stock enhancement program to all counties. We are also simplifying the commercial fish catch report system as we improve the database; and strengthening our commitment to the conservation of reef fish populations with improved coral reef monitoring and management. Lastly, we are working to define stream flows required by native freshwater species that are important in traditional Hawaiian culture. The Ocean State Initiative also strengthened the staff of the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement which was able to add 14 new officers statewide in April 1998.

**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"****COMMUNITY-BASED
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

One way in which we moved to build public and private partnerships to address the future of natural resources in Hawai'i was by convening annual "Sustainability Summits," which brought together various stakeholders from the public, other state agencies, private, commercial, and special interests. We sought their input and worked to brainstorm new ideas for managing resources and building public support and cooperation on a variety of issues facing DLNR.

DLNR has strived to involve resource users such as fishermen, boaters, thrillcraft users and hunters in maintaining our precious natural resources. As an example, during the biennium, DLNR established a Bottom Fishermen's Advisory Panel, comprised of fishermen and fishery experts. Panel members worked closely with the Division of Aquatic Resources staff for more than a year to develop draft rules on gear and take size, and to set aside areas which will be off-limits to bottomfishing. The purpose of the bottomfish rules is to allow fishing to continue, yet allow juvenile populations of this

critically reduced fishery to replenish themselves to maturity.

Community organizations who want to get involved in maintaining our state parks, harbors, and cultural sites may adopt a facility or site by signing a formal adoption or curatorship agreement with DLNR. More than 15 state small boat harbors and boat launch ramps were adopted by community groups under the Adopt-a-Harbor program. The Division of State Parks has benefited from the community's curatorship of 7 historic properties in state parks on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i, and 3 Adopt-a-Park agreements, 3 docent programs and 5 management agreements with non-profit organizations which operate programs in parks, or assist in the stewardship of park resources. Through the State Historic Preservation Division, other sites cared for by community organizations include, Ho'ona (Hawai'i), Pahukini Heiau (O'ahu), Greenbank (Kohala, Hawai'i) and Hanapēpē Salt Ponds (Kaua'i).

Island communities also joined with DLNR as stewards of natural resources through participation in cleanups of state parks, such as at Kekaha Kai State Park, Hawai'i; Nā Pali Coast State Park, Kaua'i; and

Economic growth can no longer be considered without conscious attention to environmental protection.

**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"**

Ka'ena Point Natural Area Reserve, O'ahu. And at each of these three areas, DLNR established on-site "park ambassadors" to educate park visitors on how to care for the special beauty of the area. This active involvement by community groups in the caring for our resources educates them about the extent of our management responsibilities, and results in a facility being better maintained for all public users.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

DLNR extended its outreach to the community by creating an Office of Volunteer and Community Services to educate the public and to expose young people to careers in this field. Individuals or groups wanting to help DLNR protect state resources were able to call the Community Services Office to find out about volunteer opportunities in DLNR, or with our many partners. The Volunteer and Community Services Office also coordinated DLNR's participation in special events and community fairs with displays and personnel.

A new Visitor Education Center and One-Stop Permit Center were created together in one location at our Honolulu office, to offer educa-

tional displays about our "Sustainability" philosophy, the uniqueness of Hawai'i's natural heritage, and ways the public can help protect Hawai'i's resources. The Visitor Education Center formed part of a larger departmental vision to inform and engage Hawai'i's citizens in becoming stewards of our island state. Numerous school groups have toured the "Only in Hawai'i" exhibit, where they learned about the challenges facing our islands — such as the threat of alien plant, insect and animal species, the extinction of native flora and fauna, and the increasing human impact and use of Hawai'i's limited resources.

The One-Stop Permit Counter increased efficiency of DLNR services to the public by making available the most popular permits — for fishing, hunting, camping, and gathering and collecting forest products — in one convenient location. A mini-DLNR store is open at the center, where merchandise can be purchased to support natural resource management programs.

The Community Services Office was successful in receiving a federal grant which funded a staff member to provide school tours of the Visitor Education Center, assist with

preparation of displays, and provide organizational support for community cleanups of marine debris. The office also obtained a federal grant to bring to Hawai'i the first national AmeriCorps team of young adults for six weeks' training in natural resource management.

To promote public awareness that alien plants, animals and insects entering the islands by air and sea pose "the single greatest threat" to Hawai'i's economy, environment, health and lifestyle, DLNR, with The Nature Conservancy Hawai'i, initiated a "Silent Invasion" public awareness campaign on KITV-4 in October 1996. The campaign began with the publication of a report authored by the Coordinating Group on Alien Species (CGAPS), a partnership of 14 state, federal and private interests in Hawai'i. The report lists specific steps Hawai'i's residents and visitors can take to help prevent and contain the problem. Hawai'i Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel K. Akaka announced the appropriation of federal funds for Brown Tree Snake control, increased U.S. Forest Service staff for alien species research and control of Miconia and other noxious weeds.



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"

YOUTH EDUCATION

For the past four years, DLNR's Volunteer and Community Services Office has organized a summer program for high school and college students to work alongside our various resource managers in the field. This 8-week service learning program, called the Hawai'i Summer Youth Conservation Corps, has provided education, team-building, support and training for 61 students in hands-on resource conservation projects. This intense and innovative program seeks to instill in young people an understanding of, and an appreciation for natural resource management challenges.

COASTAL LANDS PROGRAM

Wide, healthy beaches are critical to the health of Hawai'i's tourism-based economy, and to spare coastal development from the effects of storm surge and coastal erosion. To protect our shorelines, DLNR in January 1996 began to develop a comprehensive coastal lands management plan with the University of Hawai'i School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. In FY 1997, the Board of Land and Natural Resources

approved the Coastal Erosion Management Plan (COEMAP), an inter-agency approach to solving problems of beach loss, improving agency cooperation and reducing red tape, and building support for legislative changes. DLNR is developing a Coastal Lands Program to identify coastal hazard areas, fund and conduct needed research, support increased enforcement, and identify sites for beach nourishment and/or alternative shoreline erosion mitigation projects.

FY 1997-98

HOT SPOTS

To focus our community-based management efforts, we identified 25 "hot spots," natural resource areas throughout the state, for special priority management attention. These areas have suffered due to resource degradation, user conflicts, problems with public welfare and potential illegal activity. DLNR divisions made the most of limited funding and personnel, and worked with communities to arrest the misuse and decline of these treasured locations, and place them on the road to recovery.

During our second Sustainability

Summit, we looked at the top three priority management issues for selected hotspots and began to design action plans for them. Action plans that were developed for all hotspots represent our collective vision for the future of these resources. In order to raise public awareness of the problems, and potential solutions to hotspot management, we compiled the plans in a Sustainability Hotspots notebook that was distributed to each member of the 1998 State Legislature, and also posted on our web site.

MARINE PROTECTION

DLNR marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the 101-acre Hanauma Bay as the state's first Marine Life Conservation District. Since 1967, nine other areas have received the special designation as protected areas for marine life to grow and reproduce. MLCs have been proven to be effective management tools for sustaining nearshore fish populations, providing safe habitat for populations of marine species to build and be protected from over-fishing.

Hawai'i is home to the most endangered marine mammal in the U.S. — the Hawaiian monk seal. It

**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"**

is also the winter home of the humpback whale and 10-15 other species of marine mammals who spend at least part of their lives in Hawai'i waters. To better understand, manage and protect Hawai'i's marine mammals, DLNR and the University of Hawai'i Pacific Biomedical Research Center established a collaborative program to help DLNR evaluate potential effects from commercial and recreational activities on the mammals, and to make informed decisions. A Marine Protected Mammal Specialist was hired to review DLNR's research permit process for marine mammals, and to teach the public about Hawai'i's marine mammals.

During the 1998 International Year of the Ocean, DLNR was the lead agency to coordinate public awareness events and information with other agencies and organizations about the importance of the ocean here in Hawai'i and globally. DLNR, in conjunction with the City and County of Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program, U.S. Coast Guard, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Hawaiian Humpback Whales National Marine Sanctuary, developed a quarterly calendar of ocean-related events,

and a fact-filled Year of the Ocean Guide to Hawai'i's Ocean and Marine Resources and Activities, which was distributed to teachers and libraries locally.

**NATIVE STEWARDSHIP
TRAINING**

Hui Aloha 'Āina, an 8-week pilot program, made its debut as a program designed to provide entry-level training to six young Hawaiians in both traditional Hawaiian methods of "mālama 'āina" (caring for the land), and in modern resource and cultural site management. While funding restrictions prevented Hui Aloha 'Āina from fulfilling its originally intended 9-month term, it may serve as a springboard to inspire some of the participants to pursue careers and higher degrees appropriate to this career field. The long-term goal of this program was to build a pool of trained Hawaiians to participate in land stewardship, and to address the under-representation of Native Hawaiians in the field of resource management.

The Hui Aloha 'Āina project allowed six Native Hawaiians to gain valuable work experience in resource management, through

activities such as clearing trails, restoring lo'i, maintaining parks, and planting trees on Kaho'olawe. For agencies such as DLNR, this can be a way to provide career training in our home communities, and to integrate Native Hawaiian resource management values of the community with scientific and resource management perspectives.

ON-LINE ACCESS

Public awareness is one of our key strategies to preserving our treasured resources. DLNR's web page (<http://www.state.hi.us/dlnr/Welcome.html>) provides worldwide accessibility to current online information about departmental programs, services and accomplishments, and key resource management issues. During the biennium, an inter-divisional DLNR staff team worked to expand and greatly improve DLNR's web page with more extensive and useful information, scenic images of Hawai'i and more interactive features, including a departmental e-mail address. Administrative rules are being placed on the site, which increases public accessibility and reduces cost to the public, since the rules can be downloaded for free.

**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"****HISTORY IN THE MAKING**

In December 1997 the State Commission on Water Resources Management concluded several years of a contested case hearing to render a decision on allocation of water from the Waiāhole ditch in Windward O'ahu for agricultural purposes. In its final decision and order, the commission established new interim instream flow standards and supplemental flows to protect Windward streams, and authorized sufficient water to meet the present and future water needs of Leeward diversified agriculture. Of the approximately 27 million gallons of water per day that has historically flowed to Central O'ahu to irrigate sugar, 14.03 mgd will be immediately available for diversified agriculture and other uses in Leeward O'ahu. Windward streams will benefit from an additional 6 mgd that will effectively double the existing base flow in Waiāhole Stream and greatly increase the base flow in Waianu Stream.

In the same month, the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission began a long-term, state-of-the-art environmental restoration project to restore vegetation on the badly eroded and denuded former

target island. Actual reforestation and replanting work began the following spring, following removal of unexploded ordnance by experts.

As part of Governor Cayetano's vision for a "string of pearls" of shoreline parks around O'ahu, the State is proceeding to purchase the 304-acre Ka Iwi shoreline from Bishop Estate through condemnation. Acquisition of Ka Iwi is a necessary and important step to preserve the scenic vista and wilderness area of Queen's Beach for the people of Hawai'i. In September 1998 the State released \$1.8 million to acquire and preserve the Ka Iwi scenic shoreline, the last remaining open coastal wilderness area in East Honolulu.

Hawai'i has a rich tradition in forest management. This has resulted in the 11th largest state-owned forest reserve system in the United States in addition to substantial areas of privately-owned forests. DLNR is developing timber management plans in consultation with forest industry and community organizations through Nā Hoa Mahi'ai: Hawai'i Community Forestry Initiative. We look forward to developing a forest industry that is compatible with our communities. An emerging forest industry

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"

will help diversify Hawai'i's economy, provide quality jobs for Hawai'i's people, put back into use lands that were previously farmed for sugar, and supply the local industry with a new wood source.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF "EARTH'S BEST"

Any person who has the good fortune to be the Chairperson of Hawai'i's Department of Land and Natural Resources enjoys a kind of transformation. It is reminiscent of the awareness related by astronauts who step into space for the first time. The magnificence of our planet and its vulnerability become apparent.

It is easy to understand why Hawai'i symbolizes humankind's idea of natural beauty. The healing rhythm of sun, pure fresh water, pure warm skies, pure ocean, pure forested mountains, white beaches, flowing streams, birds and dazzling marine life is felt by people lucky enough to step on Hawai'i's land or feel its water. The mixture of tropical life and beauty is what makes Hawai'i "Earth's Best" place in the minds of hundreds of millions of people.

It is natural to imagine that we would create a management system to maintain the quality of the treas-

ure we inherited. Two of the most obvious components of an acceptable system would be application of the most current knowledge about our ecosystems, and relevant study of those systems to know how they are changing. If the Department of Land and Natural Resources does the job required by the Constitution and laws of the State, it will work with the community to design a future that foresees change and maintains the essence of Hawai'i.

Right now, a critical lack of adequate funding support makes it difficult for this Department to ensure a sustainable future for Hawai'i's natural environment that is comparable to, or better than, the present environment. We are truly an "ocean state," yet our budget for managing water resources (stream and ocean) is less than that of landlocked Wyoming. Lack of funding prevents development and implementation of programs for community-based management of fishing, hunting, diving and other resource-based industries. In order to ensure a sustainable future for Hawai'i's natural resources, we need to train new resource management leaders from Hawai'i's youth, something we could be doing in partnership with the Department of Education.

Though funding has been tight during the last four years, many ideas for sustaining some key natural resources for the state were developed into programs. Let us hope that these new programs are coming in time to turn the current tide of resources decline into one of sustainability. The warning signs have been there for decades. At Pearl Harbor posted notices now warn the public not to eat the fish and shellfish they may catch there, due to years of pesticide and chemical contamination from onshore activities. Overfishing has been identified as a major management challenge facing our marine ecosystem. More research and additional steps to limit further decline of affected fish populations are needed. Erosion of beaches, a serious statewide problem, continues even as DLNR and state, federal and county partners begin to implement a new plan to stem erosion and replenish beaches. Invasive non-native weeds such as Miconia and banana poka, continue to overtake native forests despite DLNR's efforts to control their spread.

As with our ocean resources, our freshwater resources are also in need of close management attention to prevent further degradation.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: "HAWAII, THE OCEAN STATE"

DLNR has an active monitoring program for native stream ecosystems and animals to help us gain baseline knowledge to better manage and conserve these resources. We are now monitoring the effects of streamflow restored to Waiāhole Stream on O'ahu. At Salt Lake, at Mānoa and other communities, we are doing more with local schools to teach students about stream ecosystems and how to keep them healthy.

However, present funding will not be sufficient to adequately plan for management of state freshwater resources. Available funding has been allocated to the preparation of a Statewide Framework for updating the Hawai'i Water Plan, and for updating specific components of the plan. Future funding is needed to update the Water Quality Plan, to complete the Water Resources Protection Plan update, and to prepare an Agricultural Water Use and Development Plan. Comprehensive water resource planning as mandated under the State Water Code (which also includes monitoring and data collection) is considered essential to effective management and protection of our state's ground and surface water resources.

Fortunately, there are signs that Hawai'i's management of its natu-

rally occurring resources is improving. The Governor, the Legislature and non-profit groups supported the new programs described in this report. The idea of community-based input for stewardship of Hawai'i's natural resources is now accepted, and is being used to a growing extent as more people become involved.

Additional support for taking care of Hawai'i, and the planet, is evolving. The international constituency concerned about the loss of unique forest, stream and ocean ecosystems is beginning to help. The link between a global tourist economy and our naturally occurring forest and marine animals is becoming more apparent as environmental degradation proceeds outside Hawai'i. These trends suggest Hawai'i will eventually have a management system that sustains key natural resources for future generations. DLNR is committed to reaching that goal as soon as possible.

